

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Environmental Protection Commission**

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**ITEM**

**18**

**INFORMATION**

**TOPIC**

**Household Hazardous Materials Program Presentation**

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The commission will be presented with an update regarding the Household Hazardous Materials program and future opportunities for the improvement of this program.

Household hazardous materials (HHMs) are found in nearly every store, under every sink, in closets, basements and garages. Consequently, nearly every household and business in the state generates HHMs. This hazardous waste is likely to end up in local solid waste facilities, or in municipal sewer systems, septic tanks or released directly into the environment unless steps are taken to manage this waste independently from other household and business wastes.

The state's HHM collection programs allow households and businesses to minimize the impact on the environment and to improve the health and safety in our homes and businesses. Iowa has invested heavily to create a network of proper disposal facilities and educational opportunities for Iowans.

- More than \$7.1 million has been invested in creating a Regional Collection Center (RCC) network for HHMs. This network currently serves 88 of Iowa's counties
- An additional \$2.6 million has been spent to reimburse the local governments for the cost of proper disposal
- More than \$260,000 has been invested in educating Iowans about household hazardous materials' use and disposal
  - \$150,000 in grants from the state, with over \$110,000 in local match
  - Additionally, each RCC has a public education component that must be in place for the duration of their financial contract with the DNR
  - All retailers selling HHMs are also required to provide educational information to consumers regarding proper use and disposal of HHMs as well as suggestions for less hazardous alternatives

As a result of this investment, Iowa has established much of the necessary infrastructure to improve the management of HHMs. The impact of this network can be examined in the program's 2007 Annual Report, found at:

<http://www.iowadnr.com/waste/hhm/files/legisreport07.pdf>

The problem is that today many Iowans do not use the network. Only about 5% of Iowans use RCCs, and only about 10% of retailers provide required information to consumers about proper use and disposal of HHMs.

To improve the network and make the best use of the established infrastructure, a recommendation to improve information associated with HHMs and access to proper disposal options will be made. This process will include:

1. Finding out from Iowans what would make them use this network and/or other proper disposal methodologies
2. Learning how to make proper disposal of waste an expectation within a community and using marketing techniques that are common to commercial marketers to promote proper use and disposal
3. Improving the retailer education program
4. Implement improvements to the system based on what we learn

Monica Stone, Environmental Program Supervisor  
Energy and Waste Management Bureau  
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